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## MATTERS OF MOMENT.

## PITH OF THE PRESS COMMENTS.

## ZEMSTVOS CONFERENCE AT MOSCOW.

Whatever may be the precise outcome of the deliberations of the Congress of Zemstvos and Dumas at Moscow, the mere fact that such a congress has been held is of profound significance. It is a landmark in the history of Russia, the starting-point of a new order of things, the germ of changes of which we may safely predict that they will be great and far-reaching, however little we may be able to foresee their exact character. In a country hitherto ruled by an iron system of despotic rule, the representatives of the people have come together not merely to supplicate or to protest, but to discuss, to judge, and to condemn the actions of the bureaucracy. The Government has been ill-advised enough to show at once that its disposition is unchanged, and that it is no longer able to do as it would.

Unhappily for Russia the constructive elements of the new movement are less in evidence than the growing determination to be done with the old order of things. An autocrat of ability and sagacity would find at the moment a splendid opportunity to do as he pleased with the Russian, and, at the same time, to consolidate his dynasty upon a new and enduring basis. There is not the faintest reason to believe that the Tsar is the man to take advantage of such an opportunity, and in his melancholy ineptitude must be recognised the chief peril to the Russian State.

## GOVERNMENT CAUGHT NAPPING.

"DAILY TELEGRAPH." At the close of last night's sitting in the House of Commons the Government sustained a defeat by three votes, in a House of exactly four hundred members, including the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The point at issue was the attempt made by the Chief Secretary to facilitate the transfer by Irish landlords to their tenants of the holdings purchased under Mr. Wyndham's Act. The sole object of this reform was to relieve the enormous pressure caused by a plethora of willing sellers and unwilling buyers. The Land Commission is blocked by applicants, and there is no question whatever as to the relief Mr. Long's proposals would afford. There is no dispute about the facts. Mr. Redmond, however, is dissatisfied with the regulations issued to the Land Commission, and in that dog-in-the-manger temper which has driven Mr. William O'Brien into open revolt, announced that he would fight even concessions to the Irish tenantry, unless the regulations were withdrawn or modified to suit him. He has succeeded, and we wish him joy of his success, for the chief victims are the poorest classes of his own countrymen. As to the effect upon the general political situation, we believe it will be nil.

"DAILY NEWS." The Government have been defeated. This is the news which to-day renders all other negligible. Two days after the despairing appeal of the Prime Minister to his whole party to avert a disaster, he has been abandoned on one of the most important votes of the Session. The end, which seemed impossible, bore so long deferred, has come at last. Thereafter for which, almost irrespective of party, all were longing who cared for the future of England, for England, for sincerity, truthfulness, and some chance of efficiency and honor in a career imperiled by the loss of all arrived. Nemesis has come, with a strange justice, out of Ireland. That mean policy which flung to the wolves, first Sir Antony Macdonnell, then Mr. Wyndham, has brought its retribution.

"Post." Many Governments have survived worse defeats than this, and from a merely party point of view dislocation at this moment, as Mr. Chamberlain pointed out on Tuesday, would be disastrous, whereas some months ago it might have been safely faced. We refrain from discussing the policy of the Government.

## GOVERNMENT'S AND VICE-ROY'S.

"STANDARD." The fall test, telegraphed yesterday from Simla, of Lord Curzon's speech in the Vice-regal Council leaves a less unpleasant impression than the summaries published in this country last morning. Though the general tone was less recalcitrant than readers at home had been believed, we cannot help saying that the whole address was a very unfortunate mistake. Nor are we shaken in this opinion by the almost unbroken unanimity of approval expressed in the Anglo-Indian newspapers. The voice of officialism, however carefully it may be trained, does not always ring true. We should be equally unwilling to adopt the extreme view of the other side, Lord Curzon had been compelled to "kiss the rod." Lord Curzon would have been well advised if he had welcomed the compromise. He would have been still wiser if he had said nothing more on the subject. It may be difficult for a statesman conscious of the gifts to brook any sort of Constitutional control, especially after he has exercised for several years the

## GERMANY AND THE WELSH COALFIELDS.

## THE ALLEGED PURCHASE.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

London, July 21.

In accordance with your instructions, I visited South Wales for the purpose of ascertaining the truth with respect to the rumored purchase by a German syndicate of a coal-bearing property of some 6 to 7,000 acres. I may say at once that the Welsh coal trade I treat the whole affair with indifference, and am much surprised and amused at the exaggerated importance with which it has been regarded by certain London and Berlin newspapers, who have been endeavoring to make capital out of it from an international point of view. I made careful and systematic enquiries, and found that the property has merely been inspected by mining engineers from Westphalia, a fact that bears no significance whatever, for there is no reason why Germans as private individuals should not invest their money in this way. The supposition that the German Government are in any way concerned in the matter is, to say the least, ridiculous. A moment's consideration would convince anyone that the possession by Germany of this or any other Welsh or English mine would be of no value in the event of a war, as the British Government could promptly, at any time, issue orders prohibiting the exportation of the coal. Moreover, the Government have given an assurance that they would take objection to any foreign Power acquiring a monopoly of steam coal, and they may be relied upon to carry out their threat if occasion arises.

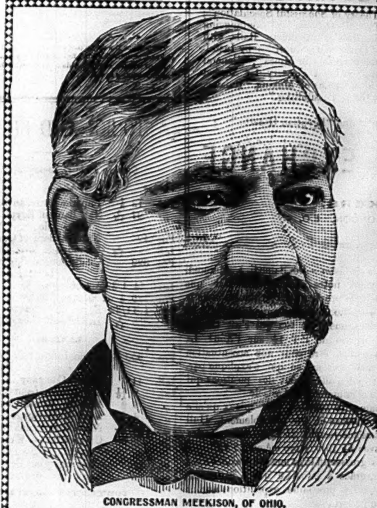
The Whitworth Estate coalfield has been in the market for a long time past. Months ago it was offered for £150,000 by the present owner, Mr. Henderson (a gentleman who, I understand, made a large fortune in South Africa), but without leading to business. Mining agents for the neighborhood are of opinion that at a depth of about 1,000 yards good steam coal might possibly be struck, but as this is from two hundred to three hundred yards deeper than the deepest pit at present being worked in South Wales, it will at once be seen that any syndicate endeavoring to reach this supposed coal would be put to enormous outlay, especially as it is known that a deep stratum of hard rock would have to be bored through. So that this part of it, in any case, is looked upon as a speculative venture, and one not likely to excite the sympathies of sound capitalists. Some authorities have asserted that the estate does not contain the quality of coal generally used for naval purposes, and these include Mr. D. A. Thomas, M.P.

The firm who owned the Whitworth estate prior to Mr. Henderson, and who sold it to this gentleman some few years ago, worked the coal only in the upper seams, but were not encouraged by the results to proceed further. It is well-known that the property is situated at the point where the steam coal and anthracite join, consequently the mining risks in such an area are very considerable. In some parts of the district the report is current that an attempt was made to form a syndicate to work the mine, but failed, because the property was not considered to be worth the money asked for it. Therefore, it is not to be expected that shrewd German capitalists, after thoroughly inspecting the coalfields, would be willing to pay over £100,000 more than was previously asked. One of the best mining properties in Wales was bought less than 20 years ago for a little over £100,000, and the previous working of this mine had a better history and was more successful than Whitworth coalfields have been.

A foreign Power desirous of acquiring a monopoly of coal for use in time of war would of course be willing to pay a bigger price than an ordinary purchaser, were it possible to have a free run of the mines in bellicose times, but they will know that they have no such opportunity. For present purposes they can obtain as much steam coal from Wales as they require, without seeking to purchase coalfields, and can handle the same in the management of them. Until much more definite evidence of the alleged deal is forthcoming, South Wales coal traders will continue to treat the story as unworthy of serious consideration from an international point of view.

## FOR THIRTY YEARS

## Congressman Meekison Suffered With Catarrh—Read His Endorsement of PERUNA.



CONGRESSMAN MEKISON, OF OHIO.

Hon. David Meekison is well known, not only in his own State but throughout America. He began his political career by serving four consecutive terms as Mayor of the town in which he lives, during which time he became widely known as the founder of the Meekison Bank of Napoleon, Ohio. He was elected to the Fifty-fifth Congress by a very large majority, and is the acknowledged leader of his party in his section of the State.

Only one flaw marred the otherwise complete success of his rising statesmanship. Catarrh with its insidious approach and tedious progress, was his only undoing. For thirty years he waged unsuccessful warfare against this personal enemy. At last Peruna came to the rescue, and he declared the following letter:

"I have used several bottles of Peruna and I feel greatly benefited thereby from my catarrh of the head. I feel encouraged to believe that if I use it a short time longer I will be able to eradicate the disease of thirty years' standing."—David Meekison, ex-Member of Congress.

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London

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18 45

13 18

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1 19

41

## NILE GAUGE READINGS.

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